

interest: thus I have succeeded in tracing the mechanism of the singular motions discovered by M. Sieboldt in the interior of the auditory capsule of the Mollusca; I have convinced myself in the most positive manner of the existence of hermaphroditism in the *Anatifa*, a fact which had been rendered doubtful by the observations of Mr. Goodsir on the alleged males of the *Balani*. I have observed that in the *Haliotides* the sexes are separated as in the *Patellæ*, and that consequently it is at present less possible than ever in my opinion to admit as the basis of classification of the Gasteropod Mollusca, the distinction of these animals into monœcious, hermaphrodite, and diœcious. I have discovered a new fact which shows how little physiological importance should be attached to the colour of the blood, so constant in the Vertebrata, in the inferior animals, a conclusion which already resulted from my observations on the Vermes. I have found in fact, in the neighbourhood of Palermo, an *Ascidia* with red blood. I shall in conclusion notice another zoological fact which of itself is of no importance, but will furnish a further proof of the errors which might be committed by placing too much confidence in the invariability of the relations which appear to exist between the organization of the lower animals and their external characters. M. Savigny, in showing how much the internal structure of the compound *Ascidia* differs from those of the Halcyons and other polypes with which they had up to that time been confounded, pointed out the existence of six tentacula in the one and of eight in the others, as being the external character the most fit to distinguish them without the aid of the scalpel; and in truth never more than six tentacula had hitherto been found round the mouth of the compound *Ascidia*, while the Halcyons and other zoophytes constructed after the same type, always present eight; but this empirical character now loses its entire value, for I have found in the Mediterranean a compound *Ascidia* having eight of these appendages."

The author promises to give an account in a future communication of his observations on the development of the Annelida.

From the *Comptes Rendus* for Nov. 25, 1844.

OBSERVATIONS ON SOME POLYPES.

Dr. Reid has detailed several new observations he has made upon certain polypes when carefully examined by the microscope: he mentions some appendages to the polypidom in the *Cellularia scruposa* and *Cellularia reptans* which had not been previously described. At the anterior part of the outer side of each cell in the *Cellularia scruposa*, and immediately in front of the tooth-like process there attached, are two pretty long spines and a rounded process, which tapers slightly from its fixed to its free extremity. This rounded process is open at the top, and is hollow in dead specimens: but when alive it is full of a contractile substance. In this contractile substance the end of a hair-like curved filament, about the length of the cell, is immersed. This hair-like filament is moved about by the contractile substance attached to it, generally in jerks after intervals of repose, and in its movements sweeps the anterior and posterior surfaces of

the cell to which it is fixed. These movements continue for a considerable time after the animal inhabiting the cell has been dead. A hollow rounded process, with a hair-like curved and moveable filament projecting from it, is also fixed upon the corresponding part of each cell of the *Cellularia reptans*. These moveable hair-like filaments are analogous to the moveable bird-head process attached to each of the cells of *Flustra avicularis*.—*Proceedings of the St. Andrews' Lit. and Phil. Soc.*, Nov. 1844.

FOOD OF THE AUSTRALIAN NATIVES.

Mr. Hodgkinson, in his 'Australia, from Port Macquarie to Moreton Bay, with Description of the Natives, their Manners and Customs,' &c., gives a somewhat elaborate account of Australian field-sports, and of the Aborigines. On the immediate banks of the MacLeay river, he says, there are no fewer than six distinct tribes; besides several others near the sources of the river among the mountains. All these tribes are able to get an abundance of food with very little trouble, and add the reptile kingdom to the ordinary sources:—

"All the larger varieties of snakes are eaten by them, but they will never touch one that has been killed by a white man. Guanans, and a short thick kind of lizard called the dew-lizard, are also much relished by them. However repugnant the idea of eating reptiles seems to us, it is from a real liking for their flesh that the Australian savages eat them, and not from the great scarcity of better food; for I have on two or three occasions known them, when employed by me in assisting at the cattle-musters, pulling maize, &c., and well-fed on bread and beef, carefully preserve any snake they chanced to kill, and cook and eat it at the next fire. Induced by curiosity, I have on several occasions tasted the flesh of every one of the reptiles just mentioned, and although nothing but the most extreme hunger could make me conquer my aversion so as to dine on them, I must nevertheless own, that not one of them possessed any disagreeable taste. The flesh of the black snake in particular was rich and juicy, somewhat resembling in flavour the flesh of a sucking-pig, whilst that of the guana was whiter and drier, and more approximated to fowl. Besides, these savages are not the only race of men who eat reptiles, for the common water-snake of England (*Natrix torquata*) is eaten in several parts of the continent of Europe; and every one knows that the guana of the West Indies (a much more hideous animal, by-the-by, than the guana of Australia) is considered very good eating by the planters in some of the islands."

MR. SCHOMBURGK'S COLLECTIONS IN GUIANA.

It appears from the report of the Chev. Schomburgk, read at a recent meeting of the Geographical Society, that notwithstanding the great difficulty of conveying collections of natural history over such a country as that traversed by him, and the frequent loss of objects collected with great pains, he has deposited in the British